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TRYING TO BUY OFF THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS

Two anti-communist Dominican Republic generals have told our Latin America correspondent, Jules Dubois, that American agents tried to bribe them to clear out of the country. There could hardly be better evidence that the United States is aware of the communist character of the rebel holdouts in Santo Domingo and of Washington's desire to appease these Red elements.

The officers approached by the cloak-and-dagger crew are Brig. Gen. Elias Wessin y Wessin, known as the army's most resolute foe of the Communists, and Brig. Gen. Juan de Los Santos-Cespedes, chief of staff of the air force.

Wessin was paid a visit at midnight Sunday by Lt. Col. Joe Wyrick, army attache at the American embassy, and David Phillips, an operative of the central intelligence agency. He was offered a trip to all military installations in the United States and also to the Panama Canal Zone. In addition, the American agents offered to buy his home and another piece of property for \$50,000. He was told that the Communists refused to surrender their weapons in the rebel sector of the capital unless he departed the country. An agreement under which a provisional government has been established called for surrender of the arms.

Gen. de Los Santos told Dubois flatly, "I was offered the sum of \$300,000 and anything else I wanted if I would leave the country immediately." He said three agents made the offer.

Both generals indignantly rejected the attempts to buy them out. Gen. de Los Santos told the Americans he intended to remain in his post to insure that the Communists would not seize power, and that

no money could buy his patriotism. Gen. Wessin pointedly asked Dubois: "What is the United States fighting for? Is it fighting for democracy or for communism in the world?"

President Johnson in late April sent 21,000 marines and soldiers into the Dominican Republic with a declaration that he was acting to forestall a communist coup d'etat. But once this force was on the scene, it took no action against the rebels, who were permitted to hold a square mile of the business and financial district of Santo Domingo. They are still installed there, and they are still armed.

As is to be expected, American officials aren't talking. The embassy in Santo Domingo says it knows nothing about approaches to the generals. The state department also is officially ignorant. The CIA won't discuss the attempted bribe or concede the existence of an agent named Phillips. The defense department also has no comment.

Yet it is established that bribes are part of the CIA's stock-in-trade. Last week the state department first tried to deny the truth of a charge by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore that the American government offered him \$3,300,000 to hush up the arrest of an American intelligence agent in 1960. The agent had offered a Singapore intelligence operative money in return for access to official secrets.

After the state department denial, Lee made public a letter of apology he received in 1961 from Secretary of State Rusk, deploring "improper activities." The department then made a turnabout and admitted Rusk had sent the apology.

In the seamy world of intelligence, bribes go with spying and dirty work. There is nothing exceptional about that. But why do we have to go around bribing anti-Communists to lay off Communists?